



Youth Week 2027

Grant Program Guidelines

October 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Communities and Justice acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this document.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Youth Week 2027

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1 Key dates and Information

Grant Round Applications Open	9 October 2026 at 9am
Grant Round Applications Close	6 November 2026 at 4pm
Assessment of submitted applications	From November 2026
Notification of application outcomes	From January 2027
Project delivery commences	7 April 2027
Project delivery ends	17 April 2027
Final Completion and Acquittal Reports	18 May 2027
Decision-maker	Director Office for Youth
NSW Government Agency	Office for Youth
Type of grant opportunity	Closed, non-competitive
Grant Program Allocation	\$500,000 (excluding GST)
Grant project funding	\$2,588 to \$4,924 (excluding GST)
Rural Remote Subsidy*	\$850 (excluding GST) *Based on eligibility
Grant program enquiries	grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au

2 Overview of the Youth Week grant program

Administered by the Office for Youth, the 2027, Youth Week program will provide one-off, time-limited grants to local government councils across NSW. Grants will range from \$2,588 to \$4,924 (ex GST). Councils from regional, rural and remote locations will be eligible for an additional \$850 (ex GST). Funding supports youth participation and inclusion activities delivered during Youth Week and targeted primarily at youth aged between 12 – 24 years. These activities and events enable young people to take the lead, contribute, and actively participate in their communities through the design and implementation of Youth Week programs.

The program requires Local Councils to engage directly with young people in the development and delivery of Youth Week activities and events. Councils must involve young people at every stage of the process – from identifying needs and ideas, to developing proposals, delivering projects, and conducting final reviews. This ensures Youth Week activities are responsive, inclusive, and genuinely youth led.

2.0 Purpose of the grant program

The purpose of the Youth Week program is to increase young people's participation in activities that strengthen their connection and belonging to their communities.

The Youth Week Program supports Local Councils to partner with young people to design and deliver community activities and events during NSW Youth Week (April each year), enabling them to:

- Overcome barriers to participating in the community
- build community-based partnerships and networks
- feel a greater sense of belonging within their community
- feel empowered, as their ideas and opinions are respected, considered and acted upon
- gain relevant training to support their participation
- feel more confident within themselves and their abilities, having expanded their knowledge and skills
- seek further opportunities to participate and stay engaged in their community.

This is best achieved by taking a **partnership approach**, where adults and young people collaborate on all aspects of group decision making, from visioning, planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Applicants should refer to and utilise the **Guiding Principles for Youth Grants** in the design, development and delivery of the Youth Week activities. This outlines the methodologies and recommendations for ensuring meaningful participation by young people throughout the Youth Week event.

2.1 Program objectives and outcomes

Activities and events funded under the Youth Week program are to **involve young people** at every stage and support **identified priority youth cohorts**, primarily aged 12 – 24 years and informed by the Office for Youth Strategic Plan. It is expected that young people will take an active role in identifying, designing and implementing these activities and events. Please utilise the **Guiding Principles for Youth Grants** in planning and developing the project.

Youth Week activities and events are required to meet the following objectives and core components:

	Program Objective	Implementation approach	Example activities	Program outcome
1	Partner with young people to deliver youth-led and youth-driven community activities/events	Supportive adult relationships Meaningful engagement	• Partner with young people to identify activities/events important to them • Support development of project proposals/plans • Provide mentoring and coordination support without taking control • Establish respectful partnerships • Establish a youth steering committee to influence decisions, chair meetings, and lead discussions • Facilitate team-building exercises • Elevate and prioritise young people’s ideas and perspectives	Short-term: Increased participation in youth-led activities/events Medium-term: Young people feel a sense of choice and control (self-determination) Short-term: Young people strengthen their connection to community Medium-term: Young people feel a sense of belonging in their local community
2	Improve young people’s access to and inclusion in community activities	Access to resources and financial support	• Identify and address barriers that may prevent participation	Short-term: Young people overcome barriers to participation Medium-term: Young people actively seek out opportunities to participate in community activities
3	Provide young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen participation and future opportunities	Acquiring and expanding knowledge and skills	• Support skill development in leadership, critical thinking, communication, negotiation, teamwork, emotional intelligence, project/event management, report writing and media engagement	Short-term: Young people learn skills that strengthen their ability to participate Medium-term: Young people report increased confidence and capacity for future participation

		External partnerships	Facilitate connections with local government, community groups, sponsors, and schools to extend networks	Short-term: Young people establish community connections Medium-term: Ongoing networks support sustained engagement
4	Recognise the contributions young people make to their local community	Respect, value, and recognition	- Promote Youth Week activities/events in the community and media - Highlight young people's contributions and impact - Provide recognition (certificates, references, etc.) - Create opportunities for reflection on achievements	Short-term: Young people's contributions are recognised and valued Medium-term: Young people feel respected and acknowledged for their role in community life

2.2 Target group

The Youth Week Grant Program is designed for young people primarily aged **12 to 24 years**, who are navigating the transition from childhood to adulthood and from dependence to independence. This target group includes young people who may face different needs and challenges in accessing recreational and social activities within their communities.

Some young people experience greater barriers to participation, including financial, geographic or social barriers. Applicants are encouraged to design activities that are inclusive of all young people, including supporting identified priority cohorts, listed below and informed by the Office for Youth Space to Speak research.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse young people
Young people with a disability	LGBTIQA+ young people
Rural and regional young people	Young women and girls
Young people experiencing poverty	Young people with adverse childhood experiences (including youth justice, out of home care, caring responsibilities)

Note: applications are not ineligible if they include a broader age range than 12-24, but this is the primary goal.

2.3 Youth priorities for Youth Week

Young people have shared, through various channels, what matters most to them, the concerns they hold, and the interests they wish to explore. The following key issues have been identified, along with example projects to support discussion and inspire ideas.

Themes	Example projects
Community inclusion and participation Opportunities to connect, socialise, and have fun while being creative and active. This includes sport, art, music, dance, craft, technology and gaming, science, movies, books, and general social gatherings.	• Youth Sports Festival: Free weekend tournaments (soccer, basketball, netball). • Creative Arts Hub: Weekly painting, music, and dance workshops. • Gaming & Tech Meetups: Inclusive gaming tournaments and coding sessions. • Outdoor Movie Nights: Community screenings with social activities.
Cultural identity and connection Opportunities to learn about and engage with their own culture, as well as the cultures of others.	• Cultural Storytelling Circles: Sharing heritage stories. • Language & Cooking Classes: Traditional recipes and language basics. • Multicultural Arts Festival: Music, dance, and art from diverse cultures. • First Nations Youth Program: Indigenous art, language revival, and connection to Country.

Learning opportunities on important topics Areas such as cyber safety and awareness, healthy relationships, financial literacy (budgeting, rent, contracts, fines), health and wellbeing, housing and homelessness supports, and preparedness, resilience, and recovery from natural disasters.	• Cyber Safety Bootcamp: Online security and digital wellbeing. • Healthy Relationships Workshops: Peer-led discussions. • Money Matters Program: Budgeting, rent agreements, and financial literacy. • Disaster Preparedness Challenge: Role-play emergency planning and resilience challenges.
Opportunities to generate change and help others Activities such as environmental restoration, citizen science, and other initiatives that allow young people to contribute positively to their communities.	• Environmental restoration projects. • Citizen Science Projects: Biodiversity monitoring and water testing. • Youth Advocacy Training: Campaigning for social change. • Climate Action: Designing sustainability solutions.

Youth Week activities and events may address one or more of the issues identified by young people, or other priorities relevant to their local communities.

Local Councils must involve young people from the outset, specifically during the ‘**Identifying the Idea**’ stage of activity and event development. Early engagement ensures that Youth Week activities are responsive to young people’s needs, reflect their interests, and foster genuine ownership and participation.

3 Application and Assessment Process

3.0 Eligibility Criteria

Under this program, eligible organisations are:

Applicant	Eligible
NSW local councils operating under the Local Government Act 1993 List of eligible councils and the funding available for each can be found at: “ Youth Week 2026 Funding Allocation ”	✓
Incorporated not-for-profit community organisations	✗
Local Aboriginal Land Councils or Indigenous corporations registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)	✗
Trusts registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)	✗
NSW non-government organisations established under their own Act of Parliament	✗
Public companies limited by guarantee (must have ACNC registration and/or DGR status)	✗

Propriety companies and companies limited by shares	X
Individuals (a sole trader) or groups of individuals	X
Unincorporated organisations	X
For profit commercial organisations	X
NSW Government or Australian Government agencies and their entities (including schools, Colleges, TAFE campuses, universities, local health districts, and public hospitals). These organisations should consider whether they have an incorporated not-for-profit body or entity that may be eligible to apply for funding.	X
An eligible organisation applying on behalf of another eligible or ineligible organisation	X

During the assessment process, checks will be conducted to confirm the eligibility of organisations. Funds will only be provided to eligible organisations.

All applicants are required to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be able to enter into a grant funding agreement with Office for Youth, Department of Communities and Justice.
- have an Australian bank account
- have an Australian Business Number (ABN)
- have appropriate insurance; this must include but is not limited to a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance
- address the NSW National Redress Scheme sanctions (refer to section 2.10).

3.1 Application Process

To be considered for funding, eligible organisations must complete the following application process:

Step 1 – Eligibility Check
Before starting an application, read these Guidelines in full to ensure you understand all requirements of the Youth Week program.
Step 2 – Prepare Your Application
Once you have confirmed your organisation’s eligibility (Section 2.1), you may begin the application process. Applications are submitted via SmartyGrants , the online grants administration system.
Youth Week is a private funding round and is not open to the general public. Only NSW Local Councils will be provided with the link to the online application form.
Review the Program Objectives and Outcomes (Section 1.4) and Youth Priorities (Section 1.6) to ensure your proposed activities/events align with program requirements.
Review the Merit Assessment Criteria (Section 2.3.1) to understand what the Office is seeking.

If you encounter issues with the application form or the SmartyGrants platform, please contact grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au for assistance.

Step 3 – Submit Your Application

Complete the application form at your own pace. You may save and return later to finish but remember to save regularly.

Applications must be submitted before the deadline. The SmartyGrants system will automatically close at 4pm on the due date. Late applications will not be accepted.

At the end of the form, you will be prompted to **review your application**. Any errors (e.g. incomplete questions, word limits not met, etc.) will be highlighted in red. **Correct all errors** before submission.

To lodge your application, click the **Submit button**. Saving alone does not submit your application. Once submitted, no changes can be made.

After submission, you will receive an **automated confirmation email from SmartyGrants**. If you do not receive this email, your application has not been successfully submitted, or the email may be in your junk folder. Check this before contacting the grants team. You can also log in to SmartyGrants and click My Submissions to view your applications. Submitted applications are marked with a green tick.

If you identify an error after submission, email grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au for assistance before the closing date.

3.2 Assessment Process

Each application will be assessed using the following process:

Eligibility assessment	Delegated staff conduct a review to ensure eligibility against the eligibility criteria (Section 2.1) and compliance with these guidelines.
Merit assessment and recommendations	Each eligible application will be assessed against the assessment criteria (Section 2.3.1) The delegated staff will make recommendations to the final decision maker/delegated signatory.

3.2.1 Merit Assessment Criteria

The Youth Week program is a closed, non-competitive grant funding program. Each application from NSW Local Council will be considered on its merits. Funds will not be released to Local Councils until all required documentation is provided to the Department. The release of payment to a grantee could take up to 2 weeks from the execution of the funding agreement.

Local Councils are provided with information on their funding allocation, and the application from each Local Council is Council's commitment to implement Youth Week activities/events in partnership with young people. Council contacts will be sent an email with the Program Guidelines and an invite to apply. Additionally, the Program Guidelines and any supporting documentation will be made available to the program web page.

Each application is assessed against the following criteria:

1. The applicant commits to young people having meaningful input at every stage of Youth Week (identifying the ideas/activities/events, planning and design, delivery, final review and recognition) - the program of activities/events will be youth-led and youth-driven.
2. The applicant commits to improving young people's access to and inclusion in community activities such as sport and recreation, cultural and other activities.
3. The applicant will provide young people with knowledge and skills to strengthen their ability to participate in their local community and support future social and economic participation.
4. The applicant will recognise the contributions made by young people during the development and implementation of Youth Week activities/events.
5. The applicant as part of the Completion Reporting process will clearly demonstrate the participation of young people throughout all stages of development and delivery. The applicant will provide the information and data requested by the Department.

3.3 Decision Making

The Director, Office for Youth is the final decision-maker for the program. Delegated staff will make recommendations to the final decision-maker and the outcomes will be published on the [NSW Grant Funding Finder](#).

3.4 Grant funding amounts

Youth Week provides a total of **\$500,000** which is allocated across all NSW Local Councils.

Each Local Council is allocated a portion of the available funds based on the size of the local youth population, as per the most recent Census data.

Those Local Councils that are classified as rural/regional or remote are allocated an additional subsidy of \$850 to help enable as many young people as possible to participate in Youth Week activities and / or events. The subsidy can be used for either the provision of transport to enable geographically isolated young people to participate in Youth Week activities, or an additional Youth Week activity will be held that enables isolated young people to participate. Each Local Council is advised of their funding allocation as part of the funding invitation process. To accept the funding offer, Local Councils must follow the program's instructions and complete the online application form in SmartyGrants. Funding will not be provided to Local Councils until a completed application form, Funding Agreement and all required documents have been received by the Department.

3.5 Funding allocations and matching contributions

All Local Councils are allocated the following funding information to assist their application:

A. Youth Week	Base funding allocation (ex GST)
B. Youth Week	Rural and remote subsidy, to eligible Local Councils only (ex GST)

All Local Councils **MUST** match (dollar-for-dollar in cash or equivalent in-kind contribution) the base funding allocation (component A above) provided by the Youth Week Program. For example – if a Council was allocated \$3,000 (ex GST) in base funding, the Council **MUST** cash match dollar-for-dollar or provide an equivalent in-kind contribution of \$3,000, making the total project cost for Youth Week activities \$6,000. A council can apply for a lower amount of funding if they can only match that amount.

Local Councils that are also allocated the rural and remote subsidy (component B), **DO NOT** have to match the subsidy component (B) of the funding provided by the Department. The base funding component only (component A) **MUST** be matched.

Funds can only be used for expenses and activities directly associated to the grant. Your application must outline your proposed expenditure in relation to the funding amounts identified above and included in the budget you submit with your application.

3.6 Grant fund exclusions

Councils must use the grant funds, including any interest earned, for the purposes of the grant.

Funding cannot be used for the items or activities including:

- any activity of a commercial nature that is for profit
 - interstate or overseas travel, scholarships and/or conference attendance
 - case-management or counselling services for young people
 - business as usual costs or general operating expenses such as rent, own facility hire, insurance, electricity, water, rates or the running of other programs within Local Council
 - costs that are not directly associated with the implementation or delivery of Youth Week
 - capital works (e.g. establishing or refurbishing a youth centre/space)
 - large equipment purchases (e.g. vehicles and laptops)
 - existing projects/programs
 - arrangements or commitments which are not compatible or are inconsistent with the objectives of Youth Week
 - projects that deliver outcomes under the school curriculum. Youth Week activities / events that intend on using school grounds or school facilities, cannot be run as part of the school curriculum or other areas of school responsibility
 - projects/programs/activities or events that have already been implemented at the time of application, after application or prior to contracting. Funding cannot be used to reimburse retrospective project delivery
 - religious festivals, rituals, events or promotions (except multi-faith events which involve young people from more than one religion).
 - Office for Youth manage both Youth Week and Holiday Break and any requests for funding for the same activity across both the programs may render the application ineligible.
 - Permanent salaries/wages (costs for temporary tutors/instructors for your program or activity can be included)
 - Programs or activities that encourage gambling such as bingo, or the consumption of alcohol
-

3.7 Project partners and subcontractors

For the purposes of this grants program, a project partner refers to one or more organisations or individuals engaged to assist your organisation (the lead organisation and the applicant are one in the same) to provide resources, supports and /or activities that can either be provided in-kind or funded through the grant.

Subcontractors are hired on a short-term, fee-for-service arrangement to deliver services or project activities and are funded through the grant.

Where there are project partners and/or subcontractors required, we encourage the lead organisation (the applicant) to have a partnership or subcontracting agreement in place to conduct specified activities. We expect the lead organisation to keep full financial control of the grant funds, where funds are released to project partners or subcontractors via the payment of a valid invoice.

The lead organisation will retain all contractual obligations under the Grant Agreement for delivery and accountability. For this reason, it is important that the necessary due diligence is conducted before entering into an agreement with a project partner or subcontractor.

For more information on subcontracting, visit dcj.nsw.gov.au/service-providers/working-with-us/contract-management-policies-resources/subcontracting.

3.8 Auspice arrangements

Auspice arrangements are often used to help community organisations access funding to programs that have eligibility requirements they cannot meet in the timeframe required.

The lead organisation (the applicant) known as the ‘auspicator’ is contracted to lead, manage and support the implementation of the project on behalf of an organisation (the auspicee) who would otherwise not be eligible to apply for funding.

Please note:

Auspecting arrangements are not eligible under the Youth Week program. Local Councils are the only eligible applicants / funded organisations. Funds will only be provided to Local Councils.

3.9 NSW National Redress Scheme Sanctions

The National Redress Scheme is part of the Commonwealth Government’s response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The National Redress Scheme provides support to people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

The Scheme:

- Acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions
- Holds institutions accountable for this abuse; and
- Helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment.

The Scheme started on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The NSW Government will not award a grant to an organisation with a Redress Obligation (or to any of its Related Entities) if that organisation:

- Has declined to join the Scheme, or
- At the expiry of six months after the time it is notified to join the Scheme, has failed to do so.

Visit the website for further information about the [NSW National Redress Scheme](#) sanctions.

3.10 Insurance

Grant recipients must maintain current and adequate insurance appropriate to the activities/services funded under this grant to cover any liability of the grant recipient that might arise in connection with the performance of its obligations under a Grant Funding Agreement. This must include a minimum of \$10 million Public Liability Insurance.

Applicants will be asked to provide a copy of all relevant insurance policies and certificates in the application form.

4 Successful grant applications

4.0 Grant funding agreement

Successful applicants are required to:

- Enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with NSW Department of Communities and Justice within ten business days of the grant offer being made.
- The application, Grant Funding Agreement and acquittal for the grant will be managed using the SmartyGrants management system.
- Start and complete funded activities and events within the dates specified in the Grant Funding Agreement.
- Project variations may be accepted where the requested change aligns with the Program Guidelines and the original intent of the approved project.
- Seek approval from the Office for Youth for any proposed changes to a funded activity prior to the proposed changes being made via a variation submission in your SmartyGrants portal.
- Recipients of NSW Government funding must acknowledge the support of the NSW Government in all written materials for the activity or event, in accordance with the NSW Government Branding Guidelines. The NSW Government Logo (provided on request) and an acknowledgement statement such as '*Proudly funded by*' or '*Proudly supported by*' should appear in materials such as annual reports, media releases, digital and printed materials, web pages and online documents, advertising, posters and signs.
- For more information regarding the NSW Government's Funding Acknowledgement Guidelines, please visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/branding/grants-and-funding-acknowledgement>.

4.0.1 Grant payment

Funding will be released after a Funding Agreement is fully executed. Payment may take up to 2 weeks after that, and the successful applicant must accept responsibility for all upfront costs to ensure the project is delivered as planned.

4.0.2 Bank details

It is your responsibility as the applicant to provide correct banking details, including the authorised signature to verify your bank details in the application form. Funds transferred to an incorrect bank account may not be recoverable.

4.0.3 Unspent project funds

If a grant recipient's project is completed and there are unspent project funds remaining, these must be returned to NSW Department of Communities and Justice unless otherwise specified in the grant funding agreement if more than \$250.

4.0.4 Feedback and appeals process

If your application is not successful, it does not mean your application is without merit. Funding is limited and not all applications are successful. Due to the high-volume applications, we are unable to provide individual feedback on each unsuccessful application.

4.0.5 Publication of grant information

The NSW Grant Administration Guide requires that certain information is published in relation to grants awarded no later than 45 calendar days after the grant agreement takes effect (see section 6.5 of the Guide and Appendix A to the Guide). This information is also open access under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW) (GIPA Act), which must be made publicly available unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.

5 Performance, monitoring and reporting

- All projects must be completed by 17 April 2027. You are required to submit a Final Report and Financial Acquittal in SmartyGrants no later than 18 May 2027. The Office for Youth will send you the final acquittal form prior the required date that you will need to complete in the SmartyGrants portal.
- Office for Youth staff may meet virtually or visit in person, during or at the completion of your grant activity, to review your progress. We will seek your permission to visit, in accordance with local protocols, and provide you with reasonable notice of any visit.
- Please note that any photographs or videos containing images of participants and/or staff submitted in the Final Completion Report must be accompanied by a signed Office for Youth, DCJ still and moving images consent form.
- It is a requirement that all financial records related to grant expenditure and acquittal be retained by the committee of the organisation for seven years. If the committee changes, these documents must be forwarded to the new incoming committee.
- Office for Youth, DCJ may inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant funding agreement.
- Under your Grant Funding Agreement you will be required to respond to any reasonable request for information on your project status and progress.

Any variations to the approved project scope, project location and completion time frames outlined in the original application form must be formally requested and approved in writing before any related work takes place. To discuss a variation, please contact the Grants Team by emailing grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au.

6 Additional information

6.0 Complaint handling

Any complaints should be sent in writing to grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au

6.1 Access to information

Note that documents submitted as part of a grant application may be subject to an application under the GIPA Act or an order for papers under Standing Order 52.

The GIPA Act provides for the proactive release of government information by agencies and gives members of the public an enforceable right to access government information held by an agency (which includes Ministerial offices). Access to government information is only to be restricted if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Before information is released in response to an application under the GIPA Act, there will be an assessment of the public interest considerations in favour of and against disclosure of that information, and there may be consultation requirements that apply.

The NSW Legislative Council has the power to order the production of State papers by the Executive Government. Standing Order 52 provides that the House may order documents to be tabled by the Government in the House. The Cabinet Office coordinates the preparation of the papers – that is, the return to order. The return to order may contain privileged and public documents. Privileged documents are available only to members of the Legislative Council.

6.2 Ethical conduct

Conflict of interest management

Conflicts of Interest between Office for Youth, DCJ and applicants will be managed in accordance with the DCJ's code of conduct, and declarations are made and recorded by all persons involved in performing functions related to the assessment process.

Confidentiality

Office for Youth, DCJ staff who assist an applicant with an application will not be involved in assessment for that application.

Information relating to the successful applications, including the name of the applicant, description of the funded project and the funding amount, will be included in:

- public media releases.
- an announcement on the Office for Youth, DCJ website.
- the NSW Grants finder website.
- office for Youth, DCJ social media.

Applicants must not participate in any anti-competitive conduct. It is a condition of the grant program application process that no gifts, benefits, or hospitality are to be made to any Office/Agency employee at any time. Any inducement in contravention of this condition may result in an applicant's proposal not being considered.

6.3 Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that this publication is free from error and/or omission at the date of publication. The authors, publisher and any person involved in the preparation of this publication take no responsibility for loss occurring to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of information contained herein.

Office for YOUTH



Ground Floor,
219-241 Cleveland Street,
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Locked Bag 5000
Parramatta 2124

Office hours:
Monday to Friday
9:00am – 5:00pm

E: grants@officeforyouth.nsw.gov.au